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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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# **LAKESIDE MAN INDICTED FOR TRAFFICKING IN NATIVE AMERICAN CULTURAL ITEMS**

**PHOENIX, ARIZONA** -- The United States Attorney's Office for the District of Arizona announced that on November 25, 2003, a federal grand jury at Phoenix, Arizona, returned a sixteen count indictment against **BERGEN TYRONE COWAN**, 09/01/1967, of Lakeside, Arizona.

The indictment alleges that on or between October 1, 2003 and November 5, 2003 the defendant stole nine Gaan ceremonial headdresses and six Gaan ceremonial prayer wands from the Fort Apache Indian Reservation. On November 5, 2003, the defendant sold the ceremonial items to an undercover agent for \$6,000. These Gaan ceremonial headdresses and Gaan ceremonial prayer wands were used during sacred and traditional ceremonies. After the ceremonies they were decommissioned and placed in a sacred burial site. They are items of cultural patrimony having ongoing historical, traditional and cultural importance central to the White Mountain Apache people. The defendant is currently in custody on these charges.

The federal indictment charges **BERGEN TYRONE COWAN** with fifteen counts of illegal trafficking in Native American cultural items in violation of Title 18 of the United States Code, Section

(MORE)

1170(b) and Title 25, United States Code, Sections 3001(3)(C)&(D) and 3002(c). The federal indictment also charges BERGEN TYRONE COWAN with one count of theft of tribal property in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1163.

A conviction for illegal trafficking in Native American cultural items carries a maximum penalty of five year(s), a \$ 250,000 fine or both. A conviction for theft of tribal property carries a maximum penalty of five year(s), a \$ 250,000 fine or both.

An indictment is simply the method by which a person is charged with criminal activity and raises no inference of guilt. An individual is presumed innocent until competent evidence is presented to a jury that establishes guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

The investigation preceding the indictment was conducted the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

The prosecution is being handled by Kimberly Hare, Assistant United States Attorney, District of Arizona, Phoenix, Arizona.

CASE NUMBER: CR-03-1203-PCT  
RELEASE NUMBER: 2003-205

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